

2016 Associated Students

# AS Assessment

AS Office of Assessment



## *Introduction:*

In fall 2015, a group from the Human Services Department, under the supervision of Christina Van Wingerden assessed the Structure Programming Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as SPAC) and Assessment Process of the Associated Students (hereafter referred to as the AS). From this evaluation, much was learned about the perceptions and knowledge of the Assessment process from advisors and student staff. For the purposes of this document, I will be referring to the analysis done by A. Sperry. All the members of the group found the same conclusions from the same information.

Starting on page 10, we see 17 persons, or approximately 1/10<sup>th</sup> of AS Population including advisors responded. Generally, those who responded knew the basic tenants of the process (pg 11). Additionally, the overwhelming majority of respondents stated assessment is beneficial (pg. 12) with no one stating the process was not. The respondents stated the problems they had with the process were issues of familiarity with the process, focus being limited to single offices and issues, the impersonal nature of the process, and issues **of time**. On page 16 Sperry states how difficult respondents found the timeline and constraints the least beneficial part of the process. This conclusion by Sperry supports my assertion that the timeline of the current SPAC is one of the most difficult component of balancing assessment with the job duties the staff must also perform. The issues discussed by team are what inform the knowledge of how the changes will affect the student staff.

## *Program/Services provided by the Office of Assessment:*

From the Job Description:

- **Ensure that the AS Assessment Process is effectively implemented by:**
  - Devoting a total of 15 hours per week during Fall Winter, and Spring Quarters to AS business.
  - Posting and maintaining a minimum of 5 office hours per week.
  - Becoming familiar with AS structure, policies, and procedures, especially those pertinent to assessment.
  - Serving as Chair for the Structure & Program Advisory Committee (SPAC).
  - Being knowledgeable of information regarding offices undergoing the Assessment Process, including but not limited to: statements of purpose and programmatic outcomes, services and events, structure and history, funding levels and use, position purposes and job descriptions.
  - Communicating the requirements of SPAC reportage and the AS Assessment Process to programs under assessment.
  - Assisting programs and offices in following the Assessment Process requirements and guidelines.

- Making recommendations to the AS Board of Directors regarding improvements in the AS Assessment Process.
- Advising various departments and offices on their internal and external evaluation and measurement processes throughout the year.
  - This can include event evaluations, needs inventories, software, hardware, formatting, distribution, and cataloging of assessment data.
- Ensure that the Structure and Program Advisory Committee is effectively managed and run by:
  - Supervising and coordinating assessment teams consisting of members of SPAC.
  - Developing and implementing assessment trainings for members of SPAC and its subcommittees.
  - Maintaining objectivity in conducting assessments.
  - Assessing reportage concerns, position relevance, hiring processes, transition tactics, program standards, the creation of new programs, the alteration or elimination of existing programs, institutional structure, and long-term goals for issues not directly related to the Assessment Process.
- Improve the services and activities of AS Programs assessed through SPAC by:
  - Making recommendations to the AS Board of Directors regarding programmatic improvement.
  - Providing a framework for offices to strategically invest office efforts and resources in the most effective way possible.
  - Working with previously assessed offices to ensure previously approved SPAC recommendations are successfully implemented.
  - Working with offices to gather data and prepare information in preparation for the Assessment Process.
  - Act as a resource for the AS Budget Committee by providing perspective on budgetary implications of new strategic recommendations passed by the AS Board of Directors.

From the Mission Statement:

- *The AS Assessment Process is a structured, transparent, and consistent assessment process which assesses and evaluates AS Programs on a regular quadrennial cycle. The assessment process will be used to determine what student needs are being met by each program and to propose any necessary recommendations, to the AS Board of Directors, regarding the alteration of the program. The AS Assessment Process will be conducted through the AS Structure & Program Advisory Committee (SPAC).*

A Summary of SPAC

Assessment is not a priority for non-assessment offices. This being said, much of this work could be done by the assessment coordinator if this position was not chairing SPAC every week. Over the past 4 years, SPAC has declined, both in membership and attendance. This has led to a poorer and poorer showing of work done by the committee, and placed more emphasis on the work being done by the offices. As assessment has matured, the benefits of a bureaucratic committee have shrunk. While early on in the program's short history, the committee was vital to providing feedback to recommendations during a new process, it has lost multiple members each year since 2013. This is due to a number of factors, including job commitments, school commitments, personal issues, and completely disappearing. If this committee was part of the job description of the members (such as management council, or budget committee) there would be a failsafe to ensure those who sign up for the committee in September or October would stay until the completion of SPAC. Changing assessment is something that was talked about with my two predecessors, however due to high turnover and the need to have the process finalized by the beginning of Fall Staff Development by persons new to position, there has not been time for the Assessment Coordinator to explore these options prior to the above deadline.

SPAC in its current form began in approximately 2010. This centralized assessment in the AS around this committee. Below is the timeline for the 2015-2016 year, as drafted by the AS Assessment Coordinator following the change of SPAC from a Committee to a Board of Directors subcommittee. This timeline is built to support up to 8 offices over two quarters. Examples of the documents from the 2015-2016 SPAC are attached. Please note they are for a programming office, for which the documents were created.

#### Timeline: Group 1

October 2015:	Office training (either 10/6 or 10/7) Documents 1&2 due Wednesday, October 21 <sup>st</sup> Documents 3&4 due Wednesday October 28 <sup>th</sup>
November 2015:	Documents 5&6 due Wednesday, November 4 <sup>th</sup> Week of 11/9-11/12 – Intro SPAC meeting Documents 7&8 due Wednesday, November 18 <sup>th</sup>
December 2015:	Begin work on draft recommendations
January 2016:	Draft Recommendations due Friday, January 8 <sup>th</sup> Week of 1/11-1/15 – Info Item SPAC meeting Week of 1/18-1/22 – Action Item SPAC meeting
February 2016:	Week of 2/15-2/19 – Info Item Board meeting Week of 2/22-2/26 – Action Item Board meeting
March – June 2016:	Implementation of recommendations

## Timeline: Group 2

October 2015:	Office training (either 10/6 or 10/7) Documents 1&2 due Wednesday October 28 <sup>th</sup>
November 2015:	Documents 3&4 due Wednesday November 4 <sup>th</sup> Documents 5&6 due Thursday November 12 <sup>th</sup> Week of 11/16-11/20 – Intro SPAC meeting
December 2015:	Documents 7&8 due Wednesday December 2 <sup>nd</sup>
January 2016:	Draft Recommendations due January 15 <sup>th</sup> Week of 1/18-1/22 – Info Item SPAC meeting Week of 1/25-1/29 – Action Item SPAC meeting
February 2016:	Week of 2/22-2/26 – Info Item Board meeting Week of 2/29-3/4 – Action Item Board meeting
March-June 2016:	Implement approved recommendations

## Timeline: Group 3

October 2015:	Office training (either 10/6 or 10/7)
November 2015:	Documents 1&2 due Wednesday November 4 <sup>th</sup> Documents 3&4 due Thursday November 12 <sup>th</sup> Documents 5&6 due Wednesday November 18 <sup>th</sup> Week of 11/30-12/4 – Intro SPAC meeting
January 2016:	Documents 7&8 due Wednesday December 6 <sup>th</sup> Draft Recommendations due January 22 <sup>nd</sup> Week of 1/25-1/29 – Info Item SPAC meeting
February 2016:	Week of 2/1-2/5 – Action Item SPAC meeting Week of 2/29-3/4 – Info Item Board meeting
March-June 2016:	Week of 3/7-3/11 – Action Item Board meeting Implement approved recommendations

## Timeline: Group 4

October 2015:	Office training (either 10/6 or 10/7)
November 2015:	Documents 1&2 due Thursday November 12 <sup>th</sup> Documents 3&4 due Wednesday November 18 <sup>th</sup>
December 2015:	Documents 5&6 due Wednesday December 2 <sup>nd</sup>
January 2016:	Week of 1/4-1/8 – Intro SPAC meeting Documents 7&8 due Wednesday January 6 <sup>th</sup> Draft Recommendations due January 29 <sup>th</sup>
February 2016:	Week of 2/1-2/5 – Info Item SPAC meeting Week of 2/8-2/13 – Action Item SPAC meeting
March-June 2016:	Week of 3/7-3/11 – Info Item Board meeting

Week of 3/28-4/1 – Action Item Board meeting  
 Implement approved recommendations

**SCOT Analysis:**

SCOT analysis	Helpful	Harmful
<b>Internal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everything done in the last 5 years of assessment is thoroughly documented and organized, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the process</li> <li>• Assessment carries much weight within this organization, as the amount of work within the process is highly detailed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The degree of interest is varied, as student staff is already asked to do the duties outlined to them in their job descriptions</li> <li>• High turnover within the AS has varying effects on continuity, especially following assessment years for offices,</li> </ul>
<b>External</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many sources for information and assistance are available to the improvement of assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth is limited by the greater Western Community, as the AS must consider how much funding and resources it receives when assessing.</li> </ul>

## *Areas for Improvements/ Recommendations:*

The following are the Office of Assessment’s recommendations for strategic goals for the following year, as influenced by formal assessment by the Human Services Department and experience both within and outside the Office of Assessment.

### *1. Continue Fall Staff Development Trainings*

Already planned are departmental trainings for the 2016 Fall Staff Development. These trainings will provide a more personalized view for each office as to what the Office of Assessment provides for each office. This will also introduce the offices to the SCOT Analysis, the building block for all assessment in the AS. Finally, this will add transparency to the process, as assessment specific training was previously limited to those offices undergoing the SPAC form of assessment.

### *2. Suspend SPAC for one year while testing a more “hands on” approach to the Assessment Process*

In order to free up the time of the Assessment Coordinator while exploring options for assessment as well as the trial form assessment, a suspension of SPAC is needed. This will not disrupt the previously set quadrennial cycle of office, as all the scheduled offices will take part in the trial assessment.

This trial assessment will be much more hands on than the SPAC centralized assessment. It will be over one quarter per office (with the exception of the Women’s Center), involve the Assessment coordinator more substantially in the creation of documents, and improve timeliness and efficiency of the assessment process. See below for the office distribution and a draft timeline for Fall Quarter. This timeline can be altered to allow for more time as needed.

Fall	Winter
Women’s Center (Casey)	Women’s Center*
Communications Office (Jeff)	AS Review (Jeff)
ASP Special Events (Jenn)	ASP Films (Jenn)
Disability Outreach Center (Casey)	Environmental Center (Greg)

\*Advisor Casey Hayden requested a two quarter assessment for the Women’s Center due to the current ROP departmental assessment. This timeline is still being drafted.

Fall Timeline for the Communications Office, ASP Special Events and the Disability Outreach Center:

Fall Staff Development:	SCOT analysis is performed, allowing the offices to begin the assessment process and consider where and where their programs and services are and are not fulfilling their intended purposes.
Week of 9/26-9/30:	The Assessment Coordinator, applicable student staff, and the office's advisor meet and discuss possible strategic directions for the improvement and maintaining of the office. It will then be decided what information is needed to support the strategic directions.
Week of 10/3-10/7:	The Assessment Coordinator, applicable student staff, the office's advisor, the applicable ASVP and the ASVP for Business and Operations meet to discuss the viability and support of the strategic directions, as well as edit the documents supporting the strategic directions.
Week of 10/10-10/14:	The strategic directions will be taken to the Management Council as a discussion item to explore their macro-viability. The informed body of student staff will then consent or not consent to the strategic directions.
Week of 10/17-10/21:	Once the strategic directions have been approved of, the strategic recommendations will be sent to the board as an information item.
Week if 10/24-10/28:	As with all information items, the strategic directions will then become an action item for the following Board of Directors meeting.
November-December:	At this time, the strategic directions will be implemented into the structure of the office.



Following the completion of the fall group of offices, the timeline for the winter quarters offices will be drafted.

*3. Promote a more SCOT analysis based assessment rather than a required documents based approach*

A complaint of the SPAC form of Assessment is the “just get it done” nature of the documents. Being able to decide which documents are needed to support the strategic directions of each office will eliminate what at times has proved to be busy work for all involved, as sometimes wonderfully, well-crafted documents have not been used to support the final recommendations.

Basing the assessment more substantially in SCOT will unify the assessments of all offices, while still allowing assessment to be highly tailored to each individual office.

This will also prove beneficial, as the SPAC form of assessment requires a lot of printing. Eliminating the amount of paper used for assessment makes the process much more environmentally friendly.

*4. Begin Clarifying language surrounding the Assessment Office and SPAC*

An issue facing discussion of assessment is the lack of clarity in language surrounding the process. “SPAC” and Assessment are used interchangeably. This has in the past 3-4 years created an accessibility issue surrounding SPAC, as staff assumes SPAC is the only form of assessment available to them. Additionally, there is confusion as to what office the Assessment Coordinator actually is in. This clarity of language will be further explored in talk times with the Assessment Coordinator, the AS VP for Business and Operations, and the Assistant Director of Viking Union Student Activities (Lisa Rosenberg).

*5. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the prior recommendations at the mid-way point of Winter Quarter (approximately the first week of February)*

As this is a trial period, this experiment will need to be evaluated after a period of time. During this evaluation, if the experimental form of assessment is found to be effective, then changes to the Assessment Coordinator job description, the Assessment Office Mission Statement, and any other documents related to the duties and responsibilities of the Assessment Coordinator and others can be modified. If the evaluation of the process does not find the experimental process is effective, and the use of SPAC is much more effective, the process will revert to that form. If it is found the experimental process is somewhat effective, but requires further

examination, then the Assessment Coordinator will continue to explore options for the following year.